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NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC
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PHOTOGRAPHIC
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REPORT

UNUSUAL SUBMARINE CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE WU-HAN SHIPYARD WU-CHANG, CHINA

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UNUSUAL SUBMARINE CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE, WU-HAN SHIPYARD WU-CHANG, CHINA

1. We have been able to observe an unusual submarine construction sequence at Wu-han Shipyard Wu-chang [redacted], China. A previously launched submarine was removed from the water, repositioned into a buildingway, and subsequently relaunched. This procedure has not been observed at any other shipyard in China. 25X1

2. Although initial hull construction procedure at this shipyard has occurred at the head of a buildingway (i.e., the end closest to the transverser), hull construction more often begins at the rear of a buildingway. In the later stages of construction the hull is moved to the head of the buildingway. At launch the nearly completed submarine is moved out to and along the transverser, positioned on the launch cradle, and subsequently floated out to a fitting-out barge in the Yangtze River.

3. [redacted] we observed four R-class submarines in various stages of construction in buildingways 3 and 4. The submarine at the head of buildingway 3 appeared ready for launch. In addition, three R-class submarines were on the port side of the fitting-out barge. 25X1

4. [redacted] the head of buildingway 3 was empty and the status of the previously observed submarines in the buildingways appeared unchanged. An R-class submarine was on a launch cradle, and two R-class submarines were on the port side and one was on the starboard side of the fitting-out barge. 25X1

5. [redacted] all four buildingway positions again were occupied. The R-class submarine at the head of buildingway 3 was in a very late stage of construction. Three R-class submarines were on the port side of the fitting-out barge. 25X1

6. [redacted] the head of buildingway 3 was again empty, and four R-class submarines were at the fitting-out barge (three on the port and one on the starboard sides). The construction status of the submarines previously seen in the other three buildingway positions remained generally unchanged. 25X1

7. Since the individual submarines could not be distinguished and since their positions at the barge had changed, it could not be determined which submarine was repositioned in buildingway 3. It is possible that one of the submarines required repairs or refinishing and was repositioned for that purpose.

8. Although it is difficult to determine the exact construction and fitting-out time for each submarine, the average time indicated by photography is 20 to 24 months.

9. Table 1 lists the positions and the assumed units observed at the shipyard [redacted] 25X1 25X1

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Table 1. Submarine Construction Activity, Wu-han Shipyard Wu-chang

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Locations of Subs Under Construction					
Buildingway 4		Buildingway 3		Fitting-Out Barge	Remarks
Aft	Fwd*	Aft	Fwd*		
No sub	Unit 3**	No sub	No sub	Unit 2	
No sub	Unit 4	No sub	No sub	Unit 3	Unit 2 had left fitting-out barge
--	--	--	--	--	Poor imagery
--	--	--	--	--	Poor imagery
Unit 5	Unit 4	No sub	No sub	Empty	Unit 3 had left fitting-out barge
Unit 5	Unit 4	No sub	No sub	Empty	
Unit 5	No sub	No sub	No sub	Unit 4	Unit 4 was in buildingway 4 at least 28 mos
Unit 6	Unit 5	No sub	No sub	Unit 4	
Unit 6	Unit 5	No sub	No sub	Unit 4	
Unit 6	Unit 5	No sub	No sub	Unknown	Poor imagery at fitting-out barge
Unit 7	Unit 6	No sub	No sub	Empty	Unit 4 had left fitting-out barge. Unit 5 had left shipyard.
Unit 7	Unit 6	Unit 8	No sub	Empty	
Unit 9	Unit 7	Unit 8	No sub	Unit 6	Unit 6 was in buildingway 4 at least 19 more
Unit 9	Unit 7	Unit 8	No sub	Unit 6	
Unit 9	Unit 7	Unit 8	No sub	Unit 6	
Unit 9	Unit 7	No sub	Unit 8	Empty	Unit 6 had left fitting-out barge. Unit 7 was a Ming-class SS.
Unit 9	Unit 7	No sub	No sub	Unit 8	Unit 8 was in buildingway 3 at least 10 mos
Unit 9	No sub	No sub	No sub	Units 7 and 8	Unit 7 was in buildingway 4 at least 15 mos
Unit 10	Unit 9	No sub	No sub	Unit 7	Unit 8 had left fitting-out barge
Unit 10	Unit 9	No sub	No sub	Unit 7	
Unit 10	Unit 9	Unit 11	No sub	Empty	Unit 7 had left fitting-out barge
Unit 10	Unit 9	Unit 11	No sub	Empty	
Unit 10	No sub	Unit 11	No sub	Unit 9	Unit 9 was in buildingway 4 at least 22 mos
No sub	No sub	Unit 11	No sub	Units 9 & 10	Unit 10 was in buildingway 4 at least 12 mos
Unit 12	No sub	No sub	Unit 11	Units 9 & 10	
No sub	Unit 12	No sub	Unit 11	Units 9 & 10	
Unit 13	Unit 12	No sub	Unit 11	Units 9 & 10	
Unit 13	Unit 12	Unit 14	No sub	Units 10 & 11	Unit 9 had left fitting-out barge
Unit 13	Unit 12	Unit 14	No sub	Units 10 & 11	
Unit 13	Unit 12	Unit 14	No sub	Units 10 & 11	
No sub	Unit 13	No sub	Unit 14	Units 10,11,&12	Unit 12 was in buildingway 4 at least 8 mos
Unit 15	No sub	No sub	Unit 14	Units 11,12,&13	Unit 10 had left fitting-out barge
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	Unit 14	Units 11,12,&13	Unit 17 was in a very early stage of construction
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	Unit 14	Units 11,12,&13	Unit 17 was still in a very early stage of construction
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	Unit 14	Units 11,12,&13	More subassembly sections for unit 17 were visible
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	No sub	Units 11,12,13,&14	Unit 14 was in buildingway 3 at least 11 mos. Unit 17 was confirmed.
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	Unit X; see Remarks	3 subs; see Remarks	Unit X could have been units 11,12,13,or14, unit X had been removed from barge
Unit 17	Unit 15	Unit 16	No sub	Units 11,12,13,&14	Unit X was out of the water less than 37 days

*Nearest the transverser.
**NPIC arbitrary designation;

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